

**SUMMARY OF THE
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 26, 2000**

The On-site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Wednesday, January 26, 2000, at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. William Ingersoll of the United States Navy. A list of action items resulting from this meeting is given in Attachment A. A cumulative list of outstanding action items identified and compiled by the committee is given in Attachment B. A list of participants is given in Attachment C. *The purposes of the meeting were to update committee members on the development of the basic training course for NELAC assessors and to review, prioritize, and designate responsibility for outstanding committee action items.*

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Ingersoll led the committee in a status review of the compendium of outstanding action items (Attachment B).

- **Item No. 1 Committee teleconferences**

No action.

- **Item No. 2 Preparation for Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting**

Following a brief discussion, the committee agreed that for the NELAC VI sessions,

- two sessions are needed, and
- these sessions should be scheduled so as to not coincide with the sessions of Proficiency Testing and Quality Systems committees.

Mr. Ingersoll will relay these conclusions to the NELAC Executive Secretary.

To help the committee prepare for NELAC VI, Ms. Moore has reviewed the committee's activities of the past year and is developing a summary for distribution to the committee.

- **Item No. 3 Report on NELAC authority to approve assessor training courses and training providers**

Mr. Ingersoll reported that he has arranged with the NELAC Director to meet with the NELAC Board of Directors in their scheduled February 10, 2000, meeting to clarify the NELAC's approval authority. This will allow him to report the outcome to the On-site Assessment Committee in its scheduled February 16, 2000, meeting.

In a related area, the status of the assessor checklists was discussed. Since several individuals have agreed to draft several checklists, Mr. Wayne Davis volunteered to summarize and tabulate this project.

- **Item No. 4** **Committee to consider approaching the NELAC Board of Directors (BoD) for approval to request assistance from USEPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS) Workgroup in generating PBMS-consistent technical checklists**

No action.

- **Item No. 5** **Committee to draft a letter to BoD and AA outlining committee approach to technical course development**

No action.

- **Item No. 6** **Update of NELAC On-site Assessment Standard (Chapter Three) based on issues raised at the Fifth Interim NELAC Meeting**

It was agreed that each committee member should carefully study the chapter in the context of issues raised at the fifth interim meeting. The process for maintaining the chapter was raised, and Mr. Ingersoll agreed to request an editable, electronic copy of the chapter from the NELAC Director for the committee's use.

- **Item No. 7** **Mr. Charles Dyer to forward completed QS checklist to Ms. Hankins**

No action.

- **Item No. 8** **Coordination with NELAC QS Committee on issues that bridge the two committees**

No action.

- **Item No. 9** **Coordination with AA on issues of reciprocity**

Mr. Dyer, as a member of the Accrediting Authorities group, will review their discussions and alert the On-site Assessment Committee of relevant issues. It was agreed that this report should be included as a regular agenda item for the On-site Assessment Committee.

- **Item No. 10** **Training course issues and discussion**

There was no discussion of the status of the basic assessor training course and final exam since Dr. Margo Hunt of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) was absent from this meeting. Ms. Marlene Moore reviewed the currently proposed logistics for course presentation by the Global Institute of Environmental Scientists (GIES) (late April/early May at sites on the East coast and West coast). She emphasized that these plans could only be implemented if course materials were received from USEPA by February 1, 2000.

- **Item No. 11 Changes to the NELAC On-site Assessment Standard (Chapter Three)**

It was noted that the committee must begin discussion of proposed changes to the chapter at the committee's next meeting. This is in order to meet the NELAC VI deadline of April 27, 2000, for submittal of the chapter for posting to the NELAC web page. Policy issues are a priority, and members should propose appropriate wording changes for discussion.

- **Item No. 12 Consistency issues in the completion of assessor checklists**

No action.

- **Item No.13 Evaluation criteria for on-site assessment**

No action.

- **Item No. 14 Compare Office of Water/Safe Drinking Water Act (OW/SDWA) regulations with chapter**

Ms. Susan Davis reported that in her first comparison of the USEPA Office of Water regulations (64 FR 67450) for SDWA, proficiency testing (PT) requirements are the only apparent disparity. She plans to do a more detailed comparison, and the completion date for this item was updated to reflect this.

- **Item No. 15 Increase communications with other committees**

It was noted that Mr. Ingersoll plans to meet with the NELAC Board of Directors on February 10 and will raise this issue to them.

- **Item No. 20 Responses to Field Measurements committee**

Ms. Moore will review these comments and draft a response for the consideration of this committee.

- **Item No. 21 Response to comments from Oklahoma**

Mr. Davis reported to the committee that he is in the process of drafting comments and plans to have them to the committee soon.

- **Item No. 22 Response regarding radiological PBMS comments in regard to other programs**

This issue was tabled for discussion at a later meeting.

- **Item No. 23 Response to comments from Utah**

No action.

- **Item No. 24 Response to comments from Virginia workgroup**

Mr. Davis suggested that several of these comments may have already been addressed in response to other comments. He will review the two sets of comments, along with the committee's response to the first set and prepare his analysis for this committee.

- **Item No. 25 Response to Wisconsin DNR comments**

Ms. Davis offered to review these comments for the committee, however she will need a copy of them.

- **Item No. 26 Response to Wisconsin comments**

Ms. Moore offered to review these comments for the committee.

- **Item No. 27 Response to additional comments**

Ms. Moore offered to review these comments for the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Ingersoll reported that he has received two nominations for the open position on the On-site Assessment committee. Following discussion, it was agreed that each member should E-mail their vote to Mr. Ingersoll so that a nomination can be submitted to the NELAC chair.

The issue was raised of the number of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are expected to be reviewed during an on-site assessment. Some organizations review each SOP involved, while others essentially sample SOPs, extending the review "for cause". There was an extended discussion of this issue. It was noted that the present Standard leaves no room for interpretation since:

- section 3.4.2 states "*The assessment for a field of testing must cover all of the tests for which the laboratory seeks accreditation,*" and
- the glossary defines a "test" as "*a technical operation that consists of the determination of one or more characteristics ... according to a specified procedure.*"

It was also noted that there appear to be two issues involved:

- that the SOPs are available and are being properly used, and
- that the content of each SOP is technically acceptable.

In this context, it was noted that this is an important issue of consistency between Accrediting Authorities, and that the NELAC-related activities should focus on the proper functioning of the quality system.

CONCLUSION

The next On-site Assessment Committee meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2000, at 12:30 p.m. EST. The allotted time for the teleconference having expired, the meeting was adjourned.

**ACTION ITEMS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 26, 2000**

Item No.	Action	Responsible Member	Date to be Completed
1.	Mr. Ingersoll will relay the committee's needs for its NELAC VI session to the NELAC Executive Secretary.	W. Ingersoll	
2.	Mr. Ingersoll will meet with the NELAC board of directors on 2/10/00 to clarify NELAC's approval authority, relative to assessor training issues.	W. Ingersoll	2/10/00
3.	Mr. Ingersoll will place a report of the Accrediting Authorities group as a regular agenda item of this committee.	W. Ingersoll	2/16/00
4.	All committee members will review the chapter, identify needed changes, and propose appropriate wording.	All members	2/16/00
5.	Ms. Moore will draft a response to the Field Measurements committee's comments for consideration of this committee.	M. Moore	
6.	Mr. Davis will review the committee's previous work with respect to Item 24 comments for the committee.	W. Davis	
7.	Ms. Davis will review comments by Wisconsin DNR (Compendium - item 25) for presentation to the committee.	S. Davis	
8.	Ms. Moore will review additional comments from Wisconsin DNR (Compendium - item 26) and additional comments (Compendium - item 27).	M. Moore	

**COMPENDIUM OF OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
AS OF JANUARY 26, 2000**

Item No.	Action	Responsible Member	Date to be Completed
1.	<p>The following teleconference date is set: February 16, 2000; 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. EST.</p> <p>Additional dates to be scheduled: March 1, 2000; March 22, 2000; April 12, 2000; April 26, 2000; May 10, 2000; May 24, 2000; June 7, 2000; and June 21, 2000.</p> <p>NELAC VI meeting 6/26-29/00 - Williamsburg, VA.</p>	W. Ingersoll to contact L. Doucet, USEPA	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
2.	<p>NELAC Annual meeting preparation:</p> <p>Provide an estimate of the total time needed for your Committee's NELAC 6 session(s) to Exec Sec.</p> <p>Submit final changes to the Standards for posting on the NELAC web page prior to the annual meeting.</p> <p>Submit final Committee agendas for the annual meeting.</p> <p>Replacement of committee members whose terms are expiring - All candidates must be identified and voted upon by NELAC Committees.</p>		<p>2/14/00</p> <p>4/27/00</p> <p>5/12/00</p> <p>5/12/00</p>
3.	Mr. Ingersoll will meet with the NELAC Board of Directors to clarify NELAC's approval authority regarding assessor training courses and training providers.	W. Ingersoll to invite J. Hankins to next call to report on issue	2/10/00
4.	<p>Committee to review the following and determine actions. Needs committee discussion.</p> <p>The On-site Assessment Committee will consider approaching the NELAC BOD for approval to ask support of the USEPA's ORD PBMS Workgroup in:</p> <p>1) generating checklists covering all QC items included in USEPA mandated test methods for drinking water and waste water analysis, and</p> <p>2) listing for the On-site Assessment Committee those methods thought to be procedurally defined.</p>		1/31/00

Item No.	Action	Responsible Member	Date to be Completed
5.	<p>Committee to review the following and identify actions to be taken for each item:</p> <p>The technical course approach will be evenly split between data audit and systems audit. (Is development of technical checklists to continue?)</p> <p>The final exam will cover both data audit and systems audit and will include at least one data packet.</p> <p>Data packets will be tailored to the course discipline.</p> <p>Technical courses will be developed in at least the areas of microbiology, asbestos analysis, radiochemistry, wet chemistry, organic chemistry, and inorganic chemistry. (Is development of technical courses to continue?)</p> <p>The On-site Assessment Committee proposes that the microbiology course be developed fairly quickly.</p>		1/26/00
6.	<p>Committee to review and update standard based on following issues discussed at the Fifth Interim NELAC Meeting:</p> <p>a) Clarification of whether AARB monitors EPA or NELAP</p> <p>b) Clarification of CBI issues, including whether third party assessors may sign CBI papers on behalf of the Accrediting Authority and whether non-government employees are held to the same accountability standards as government employees</p> <p>c) Issue of reciprocity arising from question of whether an assessor must review all laboratory SOPs or a statistical sample of the SOPs</p> <p>d) Issue of “adequacy” of SOPs, including committee’s suggested three-item clarification language (see minutes)</p> <p>e) Issue of expanding the Basic NELAC Assessor Training Course, including soliciting input from NELAC stakeholders as to level of detail needed in the course</p> <p>f) Review of NELAC On-site Assessment and Quality Systems Standards to be sure that they are consistent</p>		
7.	Mr. Dyer will e-mail completed Quality Systems Checklist to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for duplication for the fifth interim NELAC meeting.		Complete
7a.	Quality Systems Checklist updated after annual meeting.	C. Dyer	8/01/00
8.	<p>Committee to explore receiving minutes from QS committee prior to web posting.</p> <p>Committee to review QS minutes for impact on Chapter 3 and training course contents.</p>	<p>W. Ingersoll</p> <p>J. Hall</p>	
9.	Committee will review minutes from Accrediting Authorities meetings for impact on Chapter 3 and training course contents.	C. Dyer	On-going
10.	Training Course Issues and discussion Final Course Exam - handling and administration	Dr. Hunt	1/26/00
11.	<p>Chapter 3 revisions - Consistency with other chapters and with training course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessor ethics requirement in training course, but not standard. Removal of Assessor Training Manual reference(s) in Chapter 3. Determine how this is to be accomplished and start preparation for next meeting. 	<p>W. Davis</p> <p>W. Davis</p>	1/26/00

Item No.	Action	Responsible Member	Date to be Completed
12.	Recommend wording for standard changes (Chapter 3) to ensure consistency of completing the checklist i.e. record of evidence observed or just deficiencies observed. Recommend wording for standard changes relating to guidance for providing recommendations and subjective comments. (See S. Davis, City of Austin, e-mail, 12/20/99?)	S. Davis	2/16/00
13.	Recommend wording for standard changes (Chapter 3) to define evaluation criteria for onsite assessment. These include barriers for not approving a lab based on multiple findings, unwillingness to take corrective action within specified time frame or repetitive findings between audit or statistical certainty based on number of observations for declaring a deficiency.	J. Hall	2/16/00
14.	Review EPA Office of Water regulations issued 12/1/99 for SDWA for consistency with Chapter 3 standard. Identify inconsistencies for review.	S. Davis	4/1/00
15.	Review opportunities for communication of On-site Assessment Committee activities to other committees and Board of Directors.	W. Davis	2/16/00
20.	Prepare response to comments received from the NELAC Field Measurements Committee. (See J. Hosenfield e-mail, 3/20/99, Chap3RV4.wpd)	M. Moore	
21.	Finalize letter communicating the On-site Assessment Committee's response to comments received from the state of Oklahoma.	W. Davis	1/31/00
22.	Radiological PBMS comments, DW versus other programs (See e-mail to Steve Baker 12/13/99)	W. Ingersoll	
23.	Utah comments (D. Mendenhall) 12/30 e-mail from Wayne (Marlene cannot find reference needs to be added to the attached.)	C. Dyer will resend	
24.	Va Work Group comments (See letter 9/98)	W. Davis	
25.	Wisconsin DNR comments (See Tami Viers e-mail, tviers@voyager.net, 2/19/99)	S. Davis	
26.	Wisconsin comments Alfredo Sotomayor (See e-mail, 3/30/99, cmmtsnlcstdschpt3399.doc)	M. Moore	
27.	Comments on Chapter 3 (See e-mail Marlene Moore resent 1/10/00)	M. Moore	
28.	Mr. Davis will revise for committee review the letter he has drafted in response to comments received from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.	W. Davis	01/26/00
29.	Dr. Hunt will make necessary changes to the basic assessor training course to include the QS Checklist prepared by Mr. Dyer, including Appendices C and D.	M. Hunt	02/01/00
30.	Dr. Hunt will consolidate basic assessor training course test bank questions and answers and distribute to committee members so that committee can verify that answers are correct.	M. Hunt	01/26/00
31.	Mr. Hall will review NELAC Quality Systems Committee meeting minutes on an ongoing basis and will update the On-site Assessment Committee on issues bridging the two committees.	J. Hall	Ongoing

Item No.	Action	Responsible Member	Date to be Completed
32.	Mr. Dyer will update the On-site Assessment Committee on an ongoing basis on AA issues that are pertinent to the committee.	C. Dyer	Ongoing
33.	Ms. Davis will draft for committee review proposed language changes to the NELAC On-site Assessment Standard (Chapter Three) to provide guidance for consistent completion of assessor checklists.	S. Davis	02/16/00
34.	Mr. Hall will draft for committee review proposed language changes to the NELAC On-site Assessment Standard (Chapter Three) to define evaluation criteria for on-site assessments.	J. Hall	02/16/00
35.	Ms. Davis will review December 1, 1999, SDWA regulatory changes for report to the On-site Assessment Committee.	S. Davis	2/16/00
36.	The On-site Assessment Committee will place on their voting agenda for the Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting the archiving of the Assessor Training Manual currently posted on the NELAC web page and the adjustment of the NELAC Standard to remove references to the manual.		5/12/00
37.	The On-site Assessment Committee will revise the Quality Systems Checklist for consistency with the July 2000 NELAC Standards.		08/01/00
38.	Ms. Moore will distribute a summary of the committee's activities of the past year to committee members.	M. Moore	
39.	Mr. Davis will summarize and tabulate status of assessor checklist development.	W. Davis	
40.	Mr. Ingersoll will request an editable copy of the chapter from the NELAC Director.	W. Ingersoll	2/10/00
41.	In his 2/10 meeting with the Board, Mr. Ingersoll will ask for assistance in improving this committee's communications with other NELAC committees	W. Ingersoll	2/10/00
42.	Each member will Email their vote for the new committee member to Mr. Ingersoll.	All	
43.	Mr. Ingersoll will submit the results of the vote to the NELAC chair.	W. Ingersoll	

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ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 26, 2000**

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